



Week 3 Assignment

Policies, Audits, and Practices

Overview

A Curriculum Management Audit is a structured approach to organizational analysis, policy direction, curriculum quality and equity, and systemic use of feedback to determine a school or school district's effectiveness in promoting student achievement. An important part of such an audit is the evaluation of the teacher's editions of textbooks and curriculum guides.

In your previous assignments, you suggested improvements to the local provisions of the TEA learning system and collected data to begin making decisions for a learner-centered staff development session. In the Week 2 assignment, you created a preliminary agenda for the learner-centered staff development. This week, you will locate and evaluate local Board of Education policies related to curriculum and instruction, describe the five Curriculum Management Audit standards, and conduct an audit activity that you will incorporate into the learner-centered staff development session that you are planning.

This week, you should:

- describe and critique the policy of a school board in regard to curriculum and instruction and its management.
- apply the principles of curriculum management auditing in evaluating the policies and practices of a school district.

Rubric

Use the following rubric to guide your work.

Tasks ↓	Accomplished	Proficient	Unacceptable
Part 1: Evaluating Board of Education Policy	Effectively demonstrates the ability to navigate a school district Web site by locating board policy related to curriculum and instruction, and composes in-depth responses to 3 questions about the policies. (3 points)	Demonstrates the ability to navigate a school district Web site by locating board policy related to curriculum and instruction and answers 3 questions about the policies. (2 points)	Does not demonstrate the ability to navigate a school district Web site and does not respond to, or makes only minimal response, to questions about policies. (0 points)
Part 2: Curriculum Management Audit	Comprehensively completes a table describing 5 Curriculum Management Audit standards, makes suggestions for school improvement on each standard, and composes in-depth answers to 3 questions about the audit. (3 points)	Completes a table describing 5 Curriculum Management Audit standards, makes suggestions for school improvement on each standard, and answers 3 questions about the audit. (2 points)	Does not complete a table describing 5 Curriculum Management Audit standards, make suggestions for school improvement on each standard, or answer questions about the audit. (0 points)
Part 3: Auditing a TE or Curriculum Guide	Effectively uses 5 criteria to evaluate a TE or curriculum guide for the content area/objective selected for the learner-centered staff development, and composes in-depth answers to 2 questions about the evaluation. (3 points)	Uses 5 criteria to evaluate a TE or curriculum guide for the content area/objective selected for the learner-centered staff development and answers 2 questions about the evaluation. (2 points)	Does not evaluate a TE or curriculum guide or answer questions about the evaluation. (0 points)
Mechanics	Few or no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. (1 point)		Responses lack clarity and depth and/or multiple errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. (0 points)

Week 3 Assignment: Application Assignment Policies, Audits, and Practices**Part 1: Evaluating Board of Education Policy**

This week's assignment has three parts. In Part 1, you will locate and report on your school district's policies related to curriculum and instruction. Because each school district sets up its Web site in its own way, this will require you to explore the site to find the relevant information.

Directions:

Go to your school district's Web site. Locate and access the policies of the local Board of Trustees. Look specifically at policies related to curriculum and instruction.

- Read and study the policies.
- Answer the following questions about your district's policies.

Does school district policy contain provisions for curriculum and instruction? Explain.

La Vernia ISD does include in our online policy manual many sections of Board Policy that reference curriculum and/or instruction. For example, here is a list of pertinent sections:

Policy Code	Title: Subtitle
EHAA(LEGAL)	BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: REQUIRED INSTRUCTION (ALL LEVELS)
EHAC(LEGAL)	BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM - REQUIRED INSTRUCTION (SECONDARY)
EGA(LEGAL)	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT - INNOVATIVE AND MAGNET PROGRAMS
EHBD(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS: FEDERAL TITLE I
EIF(LEGAL)	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - GRADUATION
EFAA(LEGAL)	INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION - TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION
EFA(LOCAL)	INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES: INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
EIC(LEGAL)	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - CLASS RANKING
EJ(LEGAL)	ACADEMIC GUIDANCE PROGRAM
FFEA(LEGAL)	STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS/COUNSELING: COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE PROGRAM
BQ(LEGAL)	PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
DFF(LOCAL)	TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT - REDUCTION IN FORCE
EF(LEGAL)	INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
EFA(EXHIBIT)	INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES - INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
EHA(LEGAL)	CURRICULUM DESIGN: BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
EHB(LEGAL)	CURRICULUM DESIGN: SPECIAL PROGRAMS
EHBAB(LEGAL)	SPECIAL EDUCATION - ARD COMMITTEE AND INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM
EHBC(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS - COMPENSATORY/ACCELERATED SERVICES
EHBE(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS - BILINGUAL EDUCATION/ESL
EHBF(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS: CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
EHDD(LOCAL)	EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS: COLLEGE COURSE WORK/DUAL CREDIT
EHDE(LEGAL)	EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS: DISTANCE LEARNING
EHBG(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS - PREKINDERGARTEN
AE(EXHIBIT)	EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
BQ(LOCAL)	PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
BQB(LEGAL)	PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS - CAMPUS-LEVEL
DMA(LEGAL)	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - REQUIRED STAFF DEVELOPMENT
E(LEGAL)	INSTRUCTION
EFE(LEGAL)	INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES - COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL
EHAB(LEGAL)	BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM - REQUIRED INSTRUCTION (ELEMENTARY)
EHAD(LEGAL)	BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: ELECTIVE INSTRUCTION
EHBK(LEGAL)	SPECIAL PROGRAMS - OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL INITIATIVES
EHDD(LEGAL)	EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS - COLLEGE COURSE WORK/DUAL CREDIT
EHDE(LEGAL)	EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS: DISTANCE LEARNING
EMI(LOCAL)	MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES: STUDY OF RELIGION

All of these examples relate directly to curriculum and/or instruction and provide clear evidence the Board is aware that curriculum and instruction are important and must be addressed and clearly articulated in Board Policy.

Based on what you have learned about state law and the TEA learning system, is your district's policy comprehensive enough? Does it make specific requirements about curriculum and instruction, or is it vague and general? Cite specific policy to strengthen your argument.

In my opinion our policy is not comprehensive enough. As I read many of our policies, these Board policies do make specific requirements about curriculum and instruction, but they relate more to the legal aspects of the curriculum that is offered and/or innovative class offerings, not curriculum design or management of the level we are studying in our classes. Examples of this include:

EHA (Legal) Curriculum Design: BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: If the parents or guardians of at least 22 students at a school request a transfer for the same school year to another school in the District for the purpose of enrolling in an educational program offered at that school, the District shall offer such a program, beginning with the following school year, at the school from which the transfers were requested. The program may be offered by teleconference.

"Educational program" means a course or series of courses in the required curriculum other than a fine arts course or a career and technology course.

Education Code 28.003

and

AE (Exhibit): Educational Philosophy: PUBLIC EDUCATION MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Texas public education system is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their full potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities in our state and nation. That mission is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of Texas and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of Texas citizens. It is further grounded on the conviction that a successful public education system is directly related to a strong, dedicated, and supportive family and that parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child. The objectives of public education are:

OBJECTIVE 1: Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.

OBJECTIVE 3: Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.

OBJECTIVE 4: A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.

OBJECTIVE 5: Educators will prepare students to be thoughtful, active citizens who have an appreciation for the basic values of our state and national heritage and who can understand and productively function in a free enterprise society.

OBJECTIVE 6: Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.

OBJECTIVE 7: Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.

OBJECTIVE 8: School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.

OBJECTIVE 9: Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.

OBJECTIVE 10: Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

The academic goals of public education are to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

GOAL 1: The reading and writing of the English language.

GOAL 2: The understanding of mathematics.

GOAL 3: The understanding of science.

GOAL 4: The understanding of social studies.

Education Code 4.001, 4.002

The majority of the information in many policies is basically taken from the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part II, in particular section 74.2 Description of a Required Elementary Curriculum and section 74.3 Description of a Required Secondary Curriculum but I recognized other sections as well.

I would sum up my investigation of our School Board policy by saying that our Board is involved in curriculum and instruction to the extent that they make sure we are offering what we are required to offer and that we follow all the

rules and laws as set out by the governing agencies and bodies, but they do not have a deeper level of involvement that really questions how we are teaching a particular course or subject area or whether there is a continuum between the written, taught and assessed curriculum. This may to some extent be an artifact of the fact that school board trustees are generally business people or parents or community members, and as non-educators and volunteers they do not have the background or time to delve deeper into the curriculum process.

Refer back to your suggested improvements for local provisions in the TEA learning system from your Analysis Assignment. Did any of your suggestions relate to board policy? Review the Week 1 article, "Develop Statewide Curriculum Guides and Increase Local Accountability of Curriculum Management."

None of the Week 1 suggested improvements related to Board policy; we generally had a feeling the issues that were most pressing dealt with lower levels of teacher implementation or school administration such as our principals. In light of this week's studies, I am now convinced that for the principals to look at instruction and curriculum in a different light, it must come from the top, not just the superintendent but through a more explicit Board policy that is more deeply concerned with the "how" of teaching instead of just the "what".

As part of my investigation into this subject in my own District, I asked our Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum her opinion of whether our Board policy is sufficient; she responded "I do not believe that our policy addresses curriculum enough. I have also found that there are few districts that do have a local policy that truly addresses the written, taught and tested curriculum. When you do find one, you can be reasonably certain that an audit has been conducted! The Board certainly does not supervise curriculum development or implementation. However, a strong board-adopted policy makes it easier to monitor effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment- and helps to shape the general direction for a district." This reinforced my new opinion that the Board policy changes have to start with more aggressive Board policies to increase and support accountability at the local level and provide a framework of expectations to hold educators accountable and ensure consistency.

If given the opportunity, how would you change board policy to strengthen curriculum and instruction in your school district?

I would change Board policy to include provisions making it easier to monitor effective curriculum, instruction and assessment by requiring Curriculum Management Audits at least once every five years, and more frequently if needed based upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Board policy should mandate a summary of audit findings to the Board in a public meeting, with detailed reports to be presented to campuses in the CIP meetings and an overall detailed analysis of findings to the DEIC (District Education Improvement Council) committee. Particular emphasis would be placed on attention to horizontal and vertical alignment and differentiated instruction to reinforce other initiatives in place in the District.

Part 2: Curriculum Management Audit

In Part 2 of the assignment, you will describe the five standards of the Curriculum Management Audit.

Directions:

Review the Week 3 lecture and readings about Curriculum Management Audits.

Demonstrate your knowledge of the Curriculum Management Audit process by completing the following table.

Standard	Standard Title	How a School District or School Demonstrates the Standard	My Suggestion for Improvement
One	Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District has an aligned written, taught and assessed curriculum -District has a Board-adopted curriculum -District has outcome-based and competency-based policies and directives in CIP and DIP -District has documented roles of accountability in curriculum planning, implementation and assessment -District has a Curriculum Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District adopts Board policy requiring Curriculum Management Audits at least once every 5 years -District requires use of online Curriculum Management System providing user-friendly reports to all stakeholders including parents
Two	Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District has a Board-adopted written curriculum -District has Board-adopted textbooks and resources -District has Board-approved schedules allocating time for learning -District has a Curriculum Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District adopts Board policy requiring Curriculum Management Audits at least once every 5 years -District requires use of online Curriculum Management System providing user-friendly reports to all stakeholders including parents -District enacts policy requiring regular Teacher's Edition reviews in all foundation curriculum subject areas as an adjunct to campus CIP annual review meetings
Three	Connectivity and Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District has a Board-adopted written curriculum insuring predictability of curriculum from one level to another -District has a Curriculum Management System supporting and promoting vertical articulation and horizontal coordination -District has written policies requiring professional development in the delivery of curriculum -District has written policies requiring monitoring of the delivery of curriculum -District has written policies requiring equal access to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District adopts Board policy requiring Curriculum Management Audits at least once every 5 years -District requires use of online Curriculum Management System providing user-friendly reports to all stakeholders including parents -District makes online delivery of curriculum available to students via distance education 24/7 via

		the curriculum	the Internet -District provides just-in-time staff development via the Internet which supports vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum
Four	Assessment (Feedback)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District has written policies mandating assessment as required by the State and other governing bodies including the TAKS test -Campuses require benchmark exams and/or regularly scheduled local assessments -District/Campuses require ongoing data analysis of data from assessments to determine instructional program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District makes local benchmark performance data available to the public to supplement AEIS data and school report cards to support enhanced feedback -District/Campuses hold public meetings explaining the correlation between AEIS data and the instructional program and curriculum effectiveness and efficiency
Five	Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District provides evidence of a curriculum-driven budgetary process -District/Campuses provide evidence that resource allocation is tied to priorities within the curriculum -District/Campuses evidence support for the delivery of curriculum -District/Campuses evidence the use of data-driven decision making to support increased student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -District adds a requirement that all budgetary discussions at Board meetings address the effect of the request on curriculum and instruction -District adds requirement that evidence of the effect of resource allocation on curriculum and instruction be documented and auditable -Campuses require data-driven evidence that all major decisions made and major expenditures will support increased student learning

How can curriculum management auditing improve curriculum and instruction in a school or school district?

A curriculum management audit can serve as a needs assessment when targeting curriculum modifications, can highlight areas where the "how" of instruction is leading to inconsistencies between different teachers within the same grade or subject area that are interfering with student achievement, can help shape the general direction of a district towards improvement of the teaching and learning process, and can help ensure that a district or campus is using learner-centered principles in their curriculum and instructional practices. If a school were low performing, a curriculum management audit might hold the key to determining where in the educational process reform efforts need to be targeted to support the various learning styles of students and promote differentiated instruction. Ultimately the bottom line is that the curriculum management process answers three questions regarding the curriculum: Does a true written curriculum exist? Is it a quality curriculum? Is the curriculum, if it does exist, being used by the teachers? These are such basic questions that the results can provide an answer to many of the higher-level questions regarding why students are not learning, or why some student groups or some teachers seem to outperform others.

Would you recommend that a Curriculum Management Audit be conducted at your campus?
Why or why not?

I would definitely recommend a curriculum audit for any campus in my District as a way to gain valuable information for a needs assessment and serve as a resource for curriculum reform efforts that we have in mind or that we may wish to use as the basis for supplemental grant funding that incorporates curriculum redesign as a major component.

I would also recommend a curriculum audit be performed on a regular basis just as we do with financial audits, to help ensure that the continuum of the written, taught and tested curriculum is being maintained for all sub-populations and by all teachers regardless of level of experience; the audit gives concrete, quantifiable data to be used in decision making for curriculum implementation that overcomes any tendency to play favorites with teachers and eliminates misconceptions about what is really being done in the classrooms with curriculum when the door is closed and the teacher is on their own.

Are there ideas from the Curriculum Management Audit process that you might include in the staff development you are planning? Explain.

The idea from the curriculum management audit process that I would like to incorporate in my professional development session is the evaluation of the teacher's edition or curriculum guide. In our case a review of all the resources, prerequisite skill and assessment information contained in the teacher's edition would help teachers do a better job on the "how" of teaching, and the specific information provided for differentiated instruction would really help target the different types and levels of learning present in our classrooms. Additionally, the detailed correlation information to the TEKS curriculum would be excellent to review with our teachers as it would help promote both horizontal and vertical alignment.

Part 3: Auditing a TE or Curriculum Guide

In Part 3 of the assignment, you will select the teacher edition of a textbook or a curriculum guide for the content area that you are covering in your planned staff development session. You will use a modified version of the 15-point scale developed by researcher Fenwick W. English to evaluate the document.

Directions:

Carefully review the teacher's edition or curriculum guide.

Rate the guide by typing the score for each criterion in the table.

0 = No mention

1 = Vague mention

2 = Basic information

3 = Clear, specific, well-delineated information

Total the score, and answer the questions related to the table.

Content Area: Mathematics	Grade Level: 7			TE or Guide Title: TE McDougal Littell Math Course 2
Criteria	Points			
	0	1	2	3
Are objectives clear and specific?				3
Are the curriculum and assessments aligned?				3
Does the curriculum provide specific prerequisite skills?				3
Does the curriculum match resources and objectives?				3
Does the curriculum provide examples for implementation in the classroom?				3
			Total Score	15

What is the value in evaluating teacher's editions and/or curriculum guides? How can such evaluations improve instruction?

Evaluating teacher's editions and curriculum guides is valuable in that it makes all stakeholders aware of all the supporting resources, specific objectives, implementation guidelines and curriculum correlations provided in a good teacher's edition, giving teachers a leg up on how to teach, even to the point of providing guidance on strategies for different levels of learners and how many days it should take to teach each section or topic. The teacher's edition also provides substantial resources for assessment, facilitating aligning the written, taught and tested curriculum. The teaching strategies included are a boon to novice teachers, helping insure horizontal alignment between different teachers using the same syllabus.

Evaluations of the teacher's editions can improve instruction by getting all teachers of a subject and grade level on the same page, promoting horizontal alignment, making teachers aware of the prepared assessment materials designed to help align the written, taught and tested curriculum, and by familiarizing teachers with the specific information contained within the teacher's edition on how to teach and how to pace for different learning styles, ultimately helping promote vertical alignment as a teacher doing a good job of using the teacher's edition or curriculum guide will cover all the curriculum elements required in the TEKS for their grade and subject.

Would this activity meet the specified criteria for the learner-center staff development session you are planning? How do you plan to incorporate the activity into your staff development agenda? Explain.

Although it had not occurred to me when initially planning my staff development session, evaluating the Teacher's Edition with the JHS Math teachers would not only be sure they are fully aware of all the correlations, objectives, prerequisite skills and assessments for their students, but would be a great way to remind them that their Teacher's Edition has specific examples of how to provide differentiated instruction and how to address different levels of learners, ideal for learner-centered instruction. Reinforcing that the teacher's different student sub-populations including Economically Disadvantaged may have different levels of knowledge or different learning skills, and seeing such a carefully mapped out set of strategies right in their hands, requiring so little effort on their part, might just be the push some teachers need to accept that accommodating different learning styles and social and psychological backgrounds is not the ponderous or impractical task they may believe it to be.

I would incorporate the evaluation of the Teacher's Edition into the staff development session after reviewing how to disaggregate and analyze the student performance data, and blend it into the collaborative brainstorming session used to determine the best course of action for the group to follow to increase learner-centered instruction in the JHS Math classrooms. The teaching examples in the book are clearly based on Tyler's and Taba's models and learner-centered instruction, as the Teacher's Edition clearly articulates both cognitive and metacognitive functions, includes frequent needs assessments and is tied to both social and psychological pedagogy.